

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method comprising:

receiving a call, originated from any source and for receipt at any receiving source per the call, at a gateway of a packetized network;

directing the call for connection to a feature platform via the network;

performing a service related to the call in the feature platform; and

after performing the service, transferring the call to another location in the network to provide a connection between the gateway and the other location, the connection being independent of the feature of the platform.

Claim 2 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the packetized network is a voice network.

Claim 3 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising providing an authentication service as the service in the feature platform.

Claim 4 (original): The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service validates a calling card number.

Claim 5 (original): The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service validates a personal identification number.

Claim 6 (original): The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service includes voice prompts.

Claim 7 (original): The method as recited in claim 3 wherein the authentication service utilizes Automatic Number Identification (ANI) information as a basis for authentication.

Claim 8 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 further comprising providing a follow-me service as the service.

Claim 9 (original): The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the other location is an egress gateway.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A communication network comprising:

a packet switched network including one or more gateways coupled to receive a feature platform coupled to receive ~~calls~~ a call, originated from any source and for receipt at any receiving source per the call, for the network requiring a feature service; and

a feature platform coupled to connect to the ~~calls~~ call received at the one or more gateways, provide the feature service and cause the ~~calls~~ call to be redirected to another point on the network after the feature service is provided.

Claim 11 (original): The communication network of claim 10 wherein the feature service is an authentication service.

Claim 12 (original): The communication network as recited in claim 11 wherein the authentication service includes voice prompting.

Claim 13 (original): The communication network as recited in claim 11 wherein the authentication service utilizes Automatic Number Identification (ANI) information for authentication purposes.

Claim 14 (original): The communication network of claim 10 wherein the feature service is a follow-me service.

Claim 15 (original): The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is redirected from the feature platform to the other location on the network using a media gateway control protocol.

Claim 16 (original): The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is routed to the feature platform according to a destination number identification service (DNIS).

Claim 17 (original): The communication network as recited in claim 10 wherein the call is received from a publicly switched telephone network (PSTN).

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method of authenticating a call received at a packetized voice network comprising:

receiving the call requiring authentication at any one of a plurality of ingress points for the network;

routing the call from the ingress point to an authentication server;

authenticating the call in the authentication server; and

routing the call to an egress point on the network, for receipt by intended recipient location for the call as per the call, instead of the authentication server after authenticating the call.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising:

receiving at a gateway to a the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic originating from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network, the information stream to be received by a target device as per the information stream;

directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an authentication service and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service; and

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service, re-directing the information stream via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with a target device.

Claim 20 (original): The method as recited in claim 19, further comprising:

authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service.

Claim 21 (original): The method as recited in claim 20,

wherein the authenticating includes bi-directional communication of encoded voice-band traffic between the voice terminal and the authentication service via the gateway.

Claim 22 (currently amended): ~~The method as recited in claim 19,~~ A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic originating from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network;

directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an authentication service and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service, re-directing the information stream via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with a target device; and

wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice terminal.

Claim 23 (currently amended): ~~The method as recited in claim 22,~~ A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic originating from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network;

directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an authentication service and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service, re-directing the information stream via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with a target device;

authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;

wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice terminal;

wherein a second destination identifier is supplied from the voice terminal coincident with the authenticating; and

wherein the second destination identifier is selective fore the target device.

Claim 24 (currently amended): ~~The method as recited in claim 22,~~ A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic originating from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network;

directing the information stream over the packet-switched network to an authentication service and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service, re-directing the information stream via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with a target device;

authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;

wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice terminal;

wherein the first destination identifier includes a phone number corresponding to the authentication service; and

wherein a second destination identifier selective for the target device is supplied from the voice terminal coincident with the authenticating.

Claim 25 (original): A method of operating a packet switched network comprising:

receiving at an authentication service in the network a request to authenticate an endpoint for a pay-per-stream distribution of media from any network source and for receipt at any receiving source per the network source;

upon authentication by the authentication service, directing the pay-per-stream distribution of media from a feature server in the network providing the pay-per-stream distribution of media as an information stream; and

providing via the packet-switched network a connection between the feature server providing the information stream and the endpoint.

Claim 26 (original): The method as recited in claim 25 wherein the authentication request originates with the endpoint.

Claim 27 (original): The method as recited in claim 26 wherein the connection between the feature server providing the information stream and the endpoint includes an egress point of the packet switched network.

Claim 28 (original): An apparatus comprising:

a packet switched network including one or more egress points coupled to an external telephone network; and

a feature platform coupled to control outgoing calls for call agents, the outgoing calls connecting respective destination numbers and respective ones of the call agents through egress points, connections between the destination numbers and the respective calling agents being independent of the feature platform after each of the calls is connected.